

First Gulf of Mexico Record for *Lutjanus cyanopterus*

MARTIN A. MOE, JR.

A LARGE lutjanid fish, *Lutjanus cyanopterus* (Cuvier), cubera snapper, was taken on 14 July 1966 with hook and line by the crew of the R/V *Hernan Cortez* of the Florida Board of Conservation Marine Laboratory. The fish was caught west of St. Petersburg, Florida (27°43' N, 84°10' W) in 25 fathoms. The specimen measured 672 mm standard length and 840 mm total length, and is now deposited in the ichthyological reference collection of the Marine Laboratory (FSBC 4001).

This identification is based on the following salient taxonomic characters (Rivas, 1949): vomerine patch crescent-shaped, without a distinct background projection; upper and lower canines strong and well developed; six gill rakers present on the lower limb of the first arch. Additional morphological features are as follows: head 2.7 in SL; depth 2.2 in SL; maxillary 2.7 in head, reaching just to the vertical of the anterior orbital margin; snout 2.3 in head; pectoral 1.4 in head; dorsal X-13; anal III-8; pectoral 17; branched caudal rays 15; scale rows approximately 46.

Rivas (1949) reported on the first record of this species for the Atlantic coast of the United States. This was a large specimen (1,000 mm SL) taken off Ft. Pierce, Florida, on 4 May 1948. Rivas also stated that the small *L. cyanopterus* are rarely taken, even in areas where the adults are common.

Professor Luis R. Rivas, University of Miami, graciously provided the following records of this rare snapper taken from United States waters since 1949. Monroe County, Florida, Big Pine Key, 88 mm SL, UMIM 5761; Dade County, Florida, Coral Gables Canal, 375 mm SL, UMIM 4838. In addition to the above, Christensen (1965) reported on two small specimens, 188 mm SL and 44 mm SL, taken from the northwest branch of the Loxahatchee River, Florida, on 3 August and 26 November of 1960. Professor Rivas confirmed the identifications and these specimens are deposited in the Florida State University ichthyological collections. A few other small specimens of *L. cyanopterus* (100 to 224 mm SL) taken from Caribbean and Bahamian waters since 1949 are now deposited in the collections of the United States National Museum and the University of Miami Ichthyological Museum (UMIM).

The cubera snapper does not appear on any faunal lists of the Gulf of Mexico or the Atlantic Ocean north of Ft. Pierce, Florida, that are available to me, and I believe this is the first record of *L. cyanopterus* in the Gulf of Mexico as well as the northernmost record of occurrence in the western Atlantic. Dr. William D. Anderson, Jr., University of Chattanooga, and Luis R. Rivas (personal communications) also know of no other Gulf or north Atlantic records of this species. However, *L. cyanopterus* is probably not as rare in the Gulf of Mexico as the above data indicate. Dr. John C. Briggs, University of South Florida (personal communication), informs me that several fish identified to this species have been taken from Texas waters, but unfortunately there are no records or preserved specimens available. It is also possible that *L. cyanopterus* may have been frequently taken in the Gulf and mistaken for its congener, *L. griseus*, especially since *L. griseus* is ubiquitous in the Gulf and in morphology very close to *L. cyanopterus*.

LITERATURE CITED

- CHRISTENSEN, R. F. 1965. An ichthyological survey of Jupiter Inlet and Loxahatchee River, Florida. Unpublished master's thesis, Florida State University, viii + 318 pp.
- RIVAS, L. R. 1949. A record of lutjanid fish (*Lutjanus cyanopterus*) for the Atlantic coast of the United States, with note on related species of the genus. *Copeia*, 1949, no. 2, pp. 150-152.

Florida Board of Conservation Marine Laboratory, St. Petersburg, Florida. Contribution No. 115.

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